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A N S W E R

ADDRESSED

TO THOSE WHO HAVE READ

SIR JOHN DALRYMPLE'S PAMPHLET.



THE DALRYMPLE PAPERS

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TO THOSE WHO HAVE READ

SIR JOHN DALRYMPLE'S PAMPHLET,

IN SUPPORT OF A TAX,

AND PERMISSION TO EXPORT RAW WOOL,

BY A

PLAIN MATTER OF FACT MAN.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXXII.

W. Musgrave.



AS it is the inherent birthright of an Englishman in all national questions to think and to speak for himself, if he be so inclined, I shall not make any apology for endeavouring to answer Sir John Dalrymple's pamphlet on the present intended application to parliament, for an allowance or permission to export Raw Wool. If this application be successful, it will, in my opinion, absolutely ruin the Cloathing trade, which is almost the only staple commodity this country has left. I
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am sorry to observe, that the public at large seem to consider this as a question to be decided by the gentlemen of Lincolnshire on the one side, and the Woollen manufacturers on the other, which has deceived many into a belief, that the landed interest of that county are all for themeasure, and consider it as their interest to support it, whereas, as far as I have been able to judge, from conversing with many gentlemen of the first fortune and character of that county, the reverse is the fact, they consider it as the scheme of a few disappointed monopolisers of that article, and by no means approve it.

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All the arguments Sir John Dalrymple uses seem to be grounded on three specific data, which he lays down as incontestible ; but all which I hope to prove erroneous—

First, That the gentlemen of Lincolnshire have, within these last thirty years amazingly improved the fleeces of that county, and that, notwithstanding this great improvement, Raw wool is fallen in Lincolnshire 50 per cent. and in most other counties 30.

Secondly, He lays great stress on the immense quantity of wool, he supposes to be annually smuggled out of this kingdom.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, That great national benefit may be derived from his having discovered an article that is not as yet specifically taxed.

To the first argument I shall observe, that Sir John does not seem to know that a country-gentleman may very greatly improve his estate, and also greatly increase the size of his cattle, particularly sheep, the subject in question, and by that very method destroy the quality of his wool, as in the present case, where, I believe, it is well known the value of the fleece decreases nearly in proportion to the increased size and weight of the sheep. If the
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above is the fact, Sir John's decision, that " the great increase in the length, " weight, and quality of the fleeces, " made by the gentlemen of Lincoln- " shire, even within these last thirty " years, shews the extent to which the " improvement of English wool might " be carried," appears to be very erroneous, as he joins improved quality to the immediate causes of its decreased value. I must further observe, that though the coarse wool of Lincolnshire is certainly sunk greatly in its value (though in no proportion to what Sir John seems to think), yet the gentlemen in Lincolnshire have greatly improved their estates, and sell their wool at this time to as much profit as ever ;

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if the average price be taken for the last fifteen years, upon good West country wool, it will be found to be about a guinea per tod—The fleeces running about 9 or 10 to a tod—The Lincolnshire gentlemen have so greatly improved their land that they can feed a breed of sheep so much larger as for 3 or 4 fleeces to weigh a tod, A tod of this wool, I am well informed, found last year a ready market at 12s and 12s 6d; therefore, if the gentlemen have improved land, so as to carry 7 of the present breed where they carried 10 of the former, they are at the present low price a gainer at the least 3s per tod. This appears to me fair argument; I agree with Sir John that
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estates in Lincolnshire are greatly improved, but conceive we must look for that improvement in the quantity rather than in the quality of either the carcase or the fleece.

I cannot avoid noticing in this place a remark of Sir John's that proves to me he is not well informed on the subject of husbandry, however extensive his knowledge may be on others. " The castilian fleeces are as miserable, though in the finest climate in the world, as they are on the worst hills in Scotland. I never had the honour of visiting those hills, but have ever understood both the mutton and wool to be remarkably fine, and that the only
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miserable consideration was the very small number they would maintain.

With respect to the fall in price, Sir John mentions, being 50 per cent. in some 30 per cent. in all counties; I have no doubt he is led into the mistake by the assertions of a very few interested monopolisers, who having bought great quantities on speculation, and kept it until nearly spoiled, speak of the price offered them, and not the price of new wool, which, as I asserted above, found a ready market last year at 12s and 12s 6d; in Lincolnshire the average price of wool for the last ten years preceding the American war, did not exceed 17s, consequently the fall

fall of wool in that county does not exceed 29 per cent. and the loss is amply made up in the quantity. The fine wool in all other parts is scarcely fallen 10 per cent and is as much sought after as ever.

Sir John's second argument, of the immense quantity smuggled, being a matter of fact easily decided, requires little to be said in answer : I shall make two observations ; first, that I cannot take his quotations of Smith's Memoirs as proof in a matter of this consequence : secondly, I know Sir John's assertion, that " If it be enquired from what coasts the largest quantity of English wool has been smuggled to France, and to what coasts the greatest quantity

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tity of French goods have been run to England, they will be found the same," to be very erroneous; as I have no doubt the coasts of Kent receive more French smuggled goods, than any in England; and I am certain very little if any wool is ever exported in return, it being well known our smugglers pay ready cash for all they buy—and further, it is well known that the smuggling trade is carried on, either in open boats or cutters, built remarkably sharp for swift sailing, and in the darkest and most tempestuous nights—Now insanity alone could induce men to carry, as Sir John supposes, a freight of wool for a freight of spirits, and in the former of these vessels, as the rain

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or spray that fell in the boat would all be imbibed by the wool, and the pump be made useless, therefore they must either throw their cargo overboard, or sink.—The latter sort of vessels, not being provided with Sir John's screws, would, from their make, carry no quantity.

The third argument used by Sir John, "That great national benefit may accrue, and much national industry be excited by a tax on Wool exported," is so diametrically opposite to my ideas, that I am actually at a loss where to begin my answer.

But as I have no intention of entering into long political disquisitions, which are both foreign to the matter
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in question, and to which I may most probably prove unequal, I shall only observe, that I believe Sir John's idea in this respect also erroneous as new, and the reason I shall give for thinking is, that if his ideas on this subject be just, we ought at this moment to be the happiest, most contented, and most industrious people on earth, as we have had the favor of more taxes conferred on us, in the course of the last six years, then would pay interest probably of half the debts of Europe.

There are several observations of Sir John's, which are as well worthy notice as his three established maxims.—

The first I shall take the liberty of mentioning, is that passage where he says,

“A tax

“ a tax upon the exportation of English wool will in one respect operate exactly in the same manner that a tax upon the exportation of Spanish wool has operated ; for in order to escape the weight of the tax merchants will export only the finest kinds of wool, and the Wool Growers, knowing this, will vie with each other who shall produce the finest.” Sir John has here entered so deeply into the interest of English gentlemen, that he absolutely loses sight of the poor manufacturer ; but I should imagine their interest would, in this case at least, be so closely blended with the land-owners and holders that it will be impossible for Sir John to separate them, as if the merchant, as he insinuates, export only the finest of our wool, the farmer,

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will find a difficulty of getting rid of the coarse, at any price ; and as the wool of Lincolnshire is all coarse, this argument appears to me to confute what it is brought to prove.

Another observation Sir John seems to think of great weight is, he wishes to draw a parallel between the utility of exporting corn and wool—He says, “ if it be imprudent to supply our enemies with a raw material for their manufacture, at an advanced price, it seems more imprudent to supply them with food, the first principle of all manufactures, at a lower price than we eat it ourselves.” This argument, which seems to carry more fairness, is upon examination equally fallacious.—First I assert, that the price which we

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portation, is still so high to the French, that I much doubt whether their manufacturers ever eat any of it, their usual food being rye or barley bread, which will always be cheaper than wheaten—Secondly, if the call or vent for our woollens depended upon the price, it would be lamentable indeed, as the French now do and ever will undersell us; but the fact is, the goodness in quality, and the duration of our manufacture is such, that, though much dearer, they are generally preferred. Now as the exportation of our Raw Wool, by Sir John's own confession, can only take place when that commodity is cheap in England and dear abroad, it will certainly tend to equalize the general price, as well as enable our natural enemies, the French, to rival our

our manufacturers in the *goodness* of their commodity, and whenever that happens the Cloathing trade of England is annihilated, as they will always undersell us, from many circumstances, particularly that the French manufacturers are content with lower wages, and worse living than an Englishman will submit to.

The last observation Sir John makes, and which alone appears to me to refute all the arguments he uses, is from *Le Negoce d'Amsterdam*, which proves the price of wool abroad to be so much higher than in England, that, says he, "Parliament may lay a larger duty on exportation, than Government will probably ask, without the risk of raising the price of wool on foreign nations so high as to stop their demand
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for it." This extract, to every thinking mind, carries its comment with it, though I cannot help remarking the *moderation* of our Government, in the article of taxation, is notorious.

Much more might be urged on this subject, but hoping what I have advanced will open the eyes of the landowners and holders to the importance of it, or induce some abler English pen to treat it more at large, I shall close my observations with a sincere and honest prayer, that a time of emancipation may arrive, when every production of this devoted country, whether useful or necessary, may no longer be liable to be scan'd by our good friends of Scotland, with a view only to taxation; and that, when they are disposed to turn their thoughts that way, they will

will consider of proper means to remit to the Treasury of England the fair production of those taxes already laid in Scotland, as the public would be astonished, were they to be acquainted with the smallness of their amount—and that when Sir John, in particular, is inclined to promote a plan for the prevention of smuggling, which I confess a most laudable undertaking, he would begin with the article of French claret smuggled to Scotland, to the great advantage of our natural enemy, the French, and to the much greater loss of their best friend, the English; for however surprising it may appear to Sir John, the English prefer claret to port as well as the Scotch, though the former drink it at 5s per bottle, while the latter have a profusion at 2s.

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Having gone thus far, I shall beg leave to name some few of the many apparent reasons for the seeming decrease in the value of Lincolnshire wool, from the excessive price it has born, which reasons I shall not endeavour to enforce, as I should conceive it an insult to the understanding of the public.

1st, The stoppage of all vent for our manufactured wool, by our being at war with almost every maritime power.

2dly, The enormous expence and risque of those channels for exportation that are still left open.

3dly, The value of money being nearly trebled.

4thly, The annihilation of a most capital branch of the woollen manufacture, the Norwich trade lost by the war with Holland.

5thly,

5thly, The increase of inclosures and improvement of land, both which have considerably increased the quantity of that particular sort of wool.

The above reasons considered, with the remembrance, that the astonishingly increased value of money, will always tend to lessen the value not of wool alone, but of every article it is intended to purchase, may I hope awaken my fellow subjects from a scene of blood and carnage hardly reconcilable with the principles of savages, much less christians, to the hopes of peace and a restoration of commercial and mutual benefits with our neighbours.



F I N I S.

